

## CLAIMS:

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1. A method of operating a computer system to validate the data stored in a plurality of data files in a database each of said data files having an associated file type and being arranged in a plurality of data stores in said data base, wherein at least one of said data files is a data dependent file containing data dependent on data in one or more other files of said data store, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting a file locator which is associated with a respective one data store in said data base;

via said selected file locator identifying a first dependent file and identifying one or more other files on which said first file is dependent;

for each identified file, selecting a first file reader associated with the file type of the identified file;

via each said selected first file reader, determining a predetermined parameter of said identified file;

comparing the predetermined parameter from the first file with that from the or each other file; and

responsive to said comparison step, providing an output signal for each data file indicating whether the data file is valid.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of identifying files comprises the steps of:

locating, via said file locator, files which contain dependency information;

for each located file, selecting a second file reader associated with the file type of the located file; and

via said second file reader identifying said first dependent file and each other file on which the first file depends.

Sub A1

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2 further comprising the steps of:

for each data store generating a list therein containing an entry for each first dependent file in the data store, said entry including a first record having details of the first dependent file.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein each entry in said list further includes a further record for each other identified file upon which the dependent file depends.

Sub A2

5. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4 further comprising the steps of:

selecting the file locator from a file locator means which contains a plurality of file locators; and

selecting a file reader from file reader means which contain a plurality of file readers.

20 6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein said predetermined parameter comprises the date on which the data file was last modified.

25 7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said predetermined parameter is a UNIX date stamp.

8. A method according to any preceding claim further comprising the steps of:

30 identifying every said first dependent file in said data store.

9. A method according to any preceding claim wherein said data store is a data base library.

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10. A computer system arranged to validate data stored in a plurality of data files in a data base each of said data files having an associated file type and being arranged in a plurality of data stores in said data base,

wherein at least one of said data files is a data dependent file containing data dependent on data in one or more other files of said data base, said system comprising:

5        a plurality of file locators each associated with a respective data store in said data base and arranged to identify a first data dependent file in said associated data store and one or more other files in said data base on which said first file is dependent;

10      a plurality of file readers each associated with a respective file type and each arranged to determine a predetermined parameter for at least one identified file having that associated file type;

15      comparison means arranged to compare the predetermined parameter determined for said first file, with the predetermined parameter determined for each other file; and

20      output means responsive to said comparison means and having an output which indicates whether said first file is valid.

11. A computer system according to claim 10, said system further comprising:

25      in each data store, at least one file which can be located and which contains dependency information which enables dependent files and said other files in the data store to be identified; and

means provided to locate said located file.

30      12. A computer system according to claim 11, further comprising:

35      a file reader associated with the located file which is adapted to provide a list in the data store, said list having an entry for each dependent file having details contained in the located file and including a record in said entry for said dependent file together with a further record for each other file upon which the dependent file depends.

Sub A<sup>3</sup>

13. A computer system according to any one of claims 10 to 12 further comprising:

file locator means containing the plurality of file locators; and

file reader means containing the plurality of file readers.

14. A computer system according to any one of claims 10 to 13 wherein said predetermined parameter comprises the date on which the date file was last modified.

15. A computer system according to any one of claims 10 to 14 wherein said predetermined parameter is a UNIX date stamp.

16. A computer system according to any one of claims 10 to 15 wherein said data store is a data base library.

17. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium having thereon:

computer program code means, when said program is loaded to make the computer execute procedure to validate the data stored in data files in the data base according to claim 1.

18. A computer readable medium, having a program recorded thereon, where the program is to make the computer execute procedure to validate the data stored in data files in a data base according to claim 1.

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